

Within two years after his discovery Laennec had written his great work on Auscultation : a work the result of his own elaborate researches, and is the basis of our knowledge of disease of the lungs and heart in the living ; even supplying the nomenclature for the phenomena observed which is current to this day. As has been said of him : "He unlocked the secrets of the heart and lungs, and by his great researches made a thorough investigation of their physiology and pathology. Before his day the various sounds characteristic of valvular lesions of the heart were not known, and the diagnosis of these conditions was made on the post-mortem table."

My reason for introducing Laennec in this paper is that while apparently he discovered the stethoscope by a fortunate circumstance, yet in reality he did so in consequence of his opportune application of a physical truth, and that both before his discovery and after it he was a most diligent seeker after and recorder of facts ; indeed, had it not been for this, it is quite possible he might have overlooked the importance of his discovery, epoch-making as it was.

In conclusion, let me quote the wise words of Sir James Paget : "Darwin had the rare power of taking the common things that other men waste, and out of them making the grandest material of scientific work ; so that it is in vain to say in any branch of practice, 'I have no opportunity for scientific inquiry, I cannot investigate this, I can contribute nothing to that which I see the scientific members of my profession are doing.' "

It requires merely the opportunity of practice in the country, and the mind and resolution of Darwin, to bring great pathological conclusions out of the most ordinary facts of daily life in general practice.

"The commonplace is of all knowledge that which we can least afford to despise or disregard."

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## REVIEW

**FILTERABLE VIRUS DISEASES IN MAN.** By Joseph Fine, M.D., B.Sc.  
Edinburgh : E. & S. Livingstone. pp. 141. 6s. net.

THE amount of work on Filterable Virus Diseases in Man has now grown so large that a new volume such as this is welcome for the three reasons set forth in the preface : To present the facts in a compact form ; to present the diseases in a manner which will best show such relationship as exists between them ; and to review the position in cases in which no definite agreement has been reached. The first chapters are devoted to tropical diseases. The account of yellow fever contains a summary of the experimental work of Noguchi and others ; and in the chapter on the typhus group particular attention is drawn to the presence of Rickettsia bodies and their significance. Diseases with which one is familiar are then considered, and include brief but illuminating facts on many diseases which have been the subjects of many discussions : the Herpes-chicken-pox-zoster group, and such everyday diseases as measles, mumps, and the common cold. The book is short, and published in a very readable fashion. It should be of great assistance to anyone interested in this engrossing subject.